

*“Put the pearl in the safe, Watson,” said he, “and get out the papers of the
Conk-Singleton forgery case...”*
The Adventure of the Six Napoleons (SIXN)

The Origin of the SIXN Safe Research Project

by Shannon Carlisle, ASH, BSI

“221b Baker Street” of the Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem
and the Chief Sherlockian of 221b Baker Street of Moore Elementary School
(the Accelerated Learning classroom)

In March of 2013, the Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem discussed “The Adventure of the Six Napoleons” during their monthly scion meeting. At the end of the tale, Holmes tells Watson to place the black pearl of the Borgias in the safe. One of the Scholars wondered what a late 1800s or early 1900s safe looked like in London. In addition, he wondered to whom it belonged. Then, the Scholar suggested that I encourage my students to attempt to learn more about the safe.

That school year, only three of my fourteen fourth-grade literacy students were male. I encouraged those boys to complete the task. One of the three students, Conor, immediately asked if they would be preparing a project for me to share with the scion. When I responded with “yes,” he told his peers that their work better be exceptional because he hoped to become a member of the scion one day. We all believed his intention and did our best to support him.

Every other day, for two months, the four of us met during our 30-minute lunch break. It proved to be a difficult task; however, the boys never missed an opportunity to meet. They loved the experience, and I did, too. In the end, they decided that the safe was an 1882 Chubb’s safe No. 33 and that it belonged to Dr. Watson. They played the game well.

On January 25, 2014, as a fifth-grader, Conor became “The Redheaded League” of the Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem. Several years later, his father became an official member of the scion as “John Clayton.” John Clayton was the cab driver in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*; therefore, the nom was most appropriate. Duncan shuttled his son to the monthly meetings before he could drive.

Our Research Questions and Conclusions for the SIXN Safe

David H., Conor K., and John M.

Mrs. Carlisle’s 4th grade Accelerated Learning Language Arts Class
Spring 2013

Whom does the safe belong to?

Possible Answers

Mrs. Hudson

Pros: She owned 221 Baker Street. The safe belonged to Mrs. Hudson, and it came with the furnished room.

Cons: A safe is costly. Would she invest in a safe for someone else to use? Also, she would have a copy of the key.

Sherlock Holmes

Pros: He purchased it to store valuables acquired from his cases. He *tells* Watson to put it in the safe, which makes us infer that it belongs to him.

Cons: Sherlock Holmes didn't care where he put things. For example, he kept tobacco in a Persian slipper ("The Adventure of the Musgrave Ritual," "The Adventure of the Naval Treaty," and "The Adventure of the Empty House") and cigars in a coal scuttle ("The Adventure of the Musgrave Ritual"). So, why would he be more careful and store items in a safe?

Dr. John H. Watson

Pros: He was tidier than his roommate.

Our Conclusion

The safe belonged to Dr. John H. Watson because, as Sherlock said, "*How often have I said to you that when you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth . . . ?*" (*The Sign of Four*).

When was the safe purchased?

In 1880, Sherlock Holmes formally declared a professional career as a consulting detective. In 1881, Sherlock Holmes met Dr. John H. Watson, and they decided to share 221b Baker Street. So, the safe would have been purchased at the beginning of Sherlock Holmes's consulting career (once Dr. Watson realized they would need it for valuables acquired from their cases) and after they moved into 221b Baker Street.

Our Conclusion

1882

Was it freestanding or built into the wall?

Our Conclusion

The safe was freestanding since it was purchased by Dr. Watson.

What brand was the safe?

During the 1880s, the popular safe brands were Chubb, Chatwood, Port, and Tann. The Chubb Company made locks and safes for Her Majesty the Queen and The Bank of England. Arthur Conan Doyle wrote specifically about a Chubb key twice in the canon: "No, sir, it is a Chubb's key" ("The Adventure of the Golden Pince-Nez") and "Chubb lock to the door" ("A Scandal in Bohemia").

Our Conclusion

He owned a Chubb Safe.

Our Final Conclusion

Dr. John H. Watson owned an 1882 Chubb's safe No. 33.

CHUBB & SON,
Lock and Safe Makers to Her Majesty the Queen; The Bank of England, &c.,
128, QUEEN VICTORIA STREET, LONDON, E.C.

<p>CHUBB'S WROUGHT IRON DOORS. CHUBB'S PATENT SAFES. CHUBB'S STRONG ROOMS. CHUBB'S DETECTOR LOCKS. CHUBB'S PATENT DOOR LATCHES. CHUBB'S KEYLESS LOCKS. CHUBB'S ELECTRIC TIME LOCK. CHUBB'S BURGLAR ALARMS.</p> <p><i>Illustrated Catalogues Free by Post. Drawings and Specifications furnished for fitting up Vaults and Strong Rooms.</i></p> <p>A Member of the Firm will be happy to wait upon Architects, Bankers, &c., by appointment.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CHUBB & SON,</p>	<p>This Engraving represents CHUBB'S NEW PATENT FIRE & THIEF RESISTING SAFE. No. 33 in Chubb & Son's Catalogue. Price . . . £48. 10s.</p> <p>This Safe is fitted (as shown) with a Solid Coffer of Hard Steel and Wrought-Iron com- bined, giving great extra security, and is especially adapted for keeping jew- elry, diamonds and other special valuables in safety.</p> <p>CHUBB'S Illustrated Price List (sent Free by Post) gives parti- culars of Locks, Safes, Doors, Strong Rooms, &c., made by</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CHUBB & SON,</p>	
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This advertisement can be found in The Proceedings: Session 1881-1882 of the Royal Institute of British Architects' publication (published in London in August of 1882).

It states

**This Engraving represents
Chubb's New Patent
Fire and Thief Resisting
Safe.
No. 33 in Chubb and Son's Catalogue
Price: 48 pounds 10 shillings**

This Safe is fitted (as shown) with a Solid Coffer, of Hard Steel and Wrought-Iron combined, giving great extra security, and is especially adapted for keeping jewelry, diamonds, and other special valuables in safety.

Our Thanks

We wish to give thanks to the following people who helped us with our research:

*The Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem for wanting to know more about the safe and giving us this task.

*John Mitchell, a retired locksmith, who taught us about domestic safes in London.
(www.safeman.org.uk)

*Francine Kitts, who introduced us to Roger Johnson from the Sherlock Holmes Pub in London.

*Roger Johnson, who attempted this research a few years ago and helped us learn more about the manufacturers of safes in London.

*Richard Krasilovsky, the president of the Empire Safe Company, who attempted to gather more information from the Chubb Safe Company.

*Russ Stutler, whose illustrations of 221b Baker Street encouraged us to get out our magnifying glasses and search for the safe. When we couldn't find it, he reminded us that one of the reasons why we can't find it (in his illustration and in other recreations of 221b) is because it should be hidden from view, especially in "such a famous detective's flat."

Additional Information about the Researchers

In the Spring 2013 *Serpentine Muse*, in "What Would You Keep?" by Steve Mason, the author describes the results of a survey in which 327 Sherlockians stated which memento from the canon they would like to receive. We would like to have the following:

David H.: Vincent Spaulding's mug shot

Conor K.: Sherlock Holmes's suit and the safe from 221B . . . so we would know what type of safe it was

John M.: Dr. John Watson's revolver or Sherlock Holmes's walking stick